

Testimony in support of the Commission on Children to the Appropriations Legislative Sub-Committee

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Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Legislative Sub-Committee:

My name is Betty Sugerman Weintraub and I am the Associate Director for Community Initiatives with the Liberty Bank Foundation. I'm here to speak to you about the valuable partnership that our foundation has had with the Commission on Children. We have partnered with the Commission for ten years on issues of importance to Connecticut children and their families.

The Commission, our foundation, and the Workforce Alliance have partnered to bring the WorkPath Fund to reality. This fund supports CT parents that have one-time barriers to either obtaining or maintaining employment. Raising over \$175,000 of private philanthropy dollars to date, this fund primarily supports transportation, work attire and equipment, certification fees, and child care expenses. Early promising wage data results from parents that have received WorkPath Funds, shows that half are seeing increased wages after the barrier has been removed.

We have worked with the Commission to expand parent engagement programs throughout our footprint of Central and Eastern CT. The Parent Leadership Training Institute, or PLTI, developed by Elaine Zimmerman, Executive Director of the Commission on Children, creates parent leaders, many of their children take on leadership roles in their schools, and the parents must also develop and run a community project. This three-pronged effort fosters development of parents, their children, and their communities.

Most recently I have served on the Two Generation Work Group coordinated by the Commission. This multi-stakeholder group, pulling together workforce, early childhood education, adult education, funders, non-profit organizations, and government leaders, to name but a few, has helped to develop the recommendations and early blueprint for Two Generation policy and how it could be implemented in Connecticut.

Our work with the Commission on Children supports the public-private partnerships that are so integral in today's environment of collaboration. These efforts have been, and will continue, to create the lasting changes that are so important to CT children and their families.

Thank you for your time.